F.B.I. Backs Plan to Remove Fragments From Connally

By DAVID JOHNSTON
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WASHINGTON, June 17 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation today endorsed the idea of removing bullet fragments from John B. Connally, the former Texas Governor who died on Tuesday at the age 76, in the hope of laying to rest the controversy over the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, agency officials said today.

Mr. Connally, who was buried today at a state cemetery near Austin, Tex., was wounded in the wrist and thigh while riding with Kennedy in a Dallas motorcade when the President was killed on Nov. 22, 1963.

F.B.I. officials here and in Dallas said they favored trying to recover the fragments if the Connally family consented. "If the family will allow this to be done, we could put this to rest," said Oliver B. Revell, the head of the F.B.I. office in Dallas. "Conspiracy theorists are not going to let this go away."

Single-Bullet Theory

An examination of the fragments could test the single-bullet theory accepted by the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination. The panel concluded that a single gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, fired all of the shots that hit the President and Mr. Connally as they rode in the motorcade in Dallas.

The panel found that Kennedy and Governor Connally were struck nearly simultaneously by a single bullet, seconds before the President was struck by a fatal shot to the head.

Justice Department officials said that they were unable to contact representatives of the Connally family today and that they did not know whether the Governor's family would agree to the search.

Bullet Found on Stretcher

In a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, Kennedy assassination researchers asked her to seek to recover the fragments, saying that if a single bullet did not cause the wounds that the two men suffered before the fatal shot, it would mean that more than one assassin fired at the President.

F.B.I. officials said today that the tests on the metal fragments might confirm whether the bullet that struck Mr. Connally was the same as the so-called "pristine" bullet found on a stretcher on which the Governor was brought to Parkland Memorial Hospital after the shootings.

Some researchers have questioned whether that bullet could have emerged nearly intact after passing first through Kennedy and then through the Governor's arm and thigh as the Warren Commission concluded.

But a House panel found in 1978 that fragments taken from Mr. Connally's wrist matched the bullet found on a stretcher that was believed to have fallen from the Governor's thigh.

Mr. Connally, who died on Tuesday of pulmonary fibrosis, served three terms as Texas's Governor from 1963 to 1969 and was Secretary of the Navy under Kennedy and Treasury Secretary for President Richard M. Nixon.

Mr. Nixon, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and all five living Texas Governors attended the funeral today, The Associated Press reported. Among the the hundreds of other mourners were Mr. Connally's wife, Nellie, and their two sons and daughter, Lady Bird Johnson, the Rev. Billy Graham and the pianist Van Cliburn.

"John Connally was a giant in every way," Mr. Graham told 850 mourners at Austin's First United Methodist Church. "He not only had lived a full life, but he left his footprints on the history of our generation."

Before the funeral, hundreds of people filed past Mr. Connally's coffin in the Texas House chamber, where his body laid in state for two hours.

National Report

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At the Texas House of Representatives, Nellie Connally mourned her husband, former Gov. John B. Connally, who died on Tuesday from lung disease. Mr. Connally was buried in Austin yesterday.